

Message Text

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DRAFTED BY EUR/NE:NGANDREWS:CN

APPROVED BY EUR - MR. STABLER

P - MR. BARBOUR

EUR/NE - MR. BUELL

S/S -SFRY

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TO AMEMBASSY OSLO IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

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EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IC, NO

SUBJECT: BRIEFING OF FOREIGN MINISTER ON ICELAND BASE
NEGOTIATIONS

1. FOREIGN MINISTER FRYDENLUND COULD NOT BE BRIEFED ON
ICELAND BASE NEGOTIATIONS DURING WASHINGTON ENERGY CONFER-
ENCE. UPON HIS RETURN TO OSLO, THEREFORE, HE INTENDS TO
CALL IN AMBASSADOR FOR BRIEFING.

2. IF FRYDENLUND SHOULD RAISE THE QUESTION OF HOW TO AP-
PROACH THE ICELANDERS ON THE BASE ISSUE, YOU MAY WISH TO
SUGGEST THAT HE MIGHT POINT OUT THE FOLLOWING:

A. THE ICELAND BASE PLAYS AN ESSENTIAL ROLE IN
NATO'S DEFENSE STRATEGY. AN EFFECTIVE NATO
DEFENSE REQUIRES SURVEILLANCE OF THE NORTH
ATLANTIC AREA. THE ICELAND BASE PROVIDES
UNIQUE GEOGRAPHICAL COVERAGE FOR NATO'S
NORTHERN FLANK. NO ALTERNATIVE BASE IN THE
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AREA WOULD SERVE NATO'S SECURITY INTERESTS SO
EFFICIENTLY.

B. THE ROLE OF THE ICELAND BASE IS TO PROVIDE

OCEAN AND AIR SURVEILLANCE, AN AIR DEFENSE CAPABILITY FOR ICELAND, AND COMMUNICATIONS AND NAVIGATIONAL ASSISTANCE IN THE AREA. ALL THESE ROLES ARE IMPORTANT AND CANNOT BE CARRIED OUT AS EFFECTIVELY FROM OTHER BASES.

C. THE SOVIET NAVY HAS BEEN GREATLY EXPANDED IN RECENT YEARS, PROPORTIONALLY MORE THAN SOVIET GROUND OR AIR FORCES. LARGE NUMBERS OF SUBMARINES ARE BEING DETECTED IN THE NORTH ATLANTIC BY THE SURVEILLANCE STATION IN ICELAND AS WELL AS BY PATROL AIRCRAFT FLYING IN FROM KEFLAVIK. WITHOUT THIS SURVEILLANCE IT WOULD BE EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TO KEEP TRACK OF THEIR MOVEMENTS INTO THE WIDER MID-ATLANTIC REGION.

D. THE NATO PRESENCE IN ICELAND HELPS TO MAINTAIN STABILITY IN THE NORTH ATLANTIC. REMOVAL OF THE BASE WOULD INVITE TROUBLE AS THE SOVIETS WILL SEEK TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THIS DESTABILIZING CHANGE.

E. EARLIER THIS MONTH, DR. JOHAN JORGEN HOLST, DIRECTOR OF THE NORWEGIAN FOREIGN POLICY INSTITUTE, AND GENERAL TONNE HUITFELD, COMMANDER, NORTH NORWEGIAN SEVENTH DIVISION, VISITED ICELAND FOR A SEMINAR ON DEFENSE AFFAIRS. THE FOREIGN MINISTER MAY WISH TO CONSULT THEM FOR THEIR REACTIONS.

3. FOLLOWING IS BACKGROUND PAPER ON WHICH YOU MAY DRAW AS NECESSARY:

PRESENT SITUATION

AT THE MOMENT, WE ARE WAITING TO HEAR FROM FOREIGN MINISTER AGUSTSSON WHEN HE WILL BE READY TO MEET WITH US. SINCE THE SECOND ROUND OF NEGOTIATIONS IN REYKJAVIK LAST NOVEMBER, SEVERAL TENTATIVE DATES FOR A MEETING HAVE BEEN POSTPONED AT ICELANDIC REQUEST.

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WE HAVE AGREED TO EACH REQUEST FOR POSTPONEMENT. WE WERE ASSURED THAT, IN THE MEANTIME, THE ICELANDIC GOVERNMENT WOULD NO TAKE ANY ACTION TO TERMINATE THE BASE.

ICELANDIC OBJECTIVE

THE PRESENT ICELANDIC GOVERNMENT'S POLICY STATEMENT WHEN IT CAME TO POWER IN 1971 SAID: "THE DEFENSE AGREEMENT WITH THE UNITED STATES SHALL BE TAKEN UP FOR REVISION OR TERMINATION IN ORDER THAT THE DEFENSE FORCE BE GRADUALLY WITHDRAWN FROM ICELAND, AIMING AT A FINAL EVACUATION DURING THE PRESENT ELECTION TERM." (THIS WOULD MEAN BY JUNE 1975.)

IN JANUARY 1973, THE FOREIGN MINISTER VISITED THE UNITED STATES FOR PRELIMINARY DISCUSSIONS.

IN JUNE 1973, DURING THE FISHERIES DISPUTE WITH THE UNITED KINGDOM, THE ICELANDIC GOVERNMENT INVOKED ARTICLE VII OF THE 1951 US-ICELAND DEFENSE AGREEMENT WHICH PROVIDES FOR A NATO REVIEW AND FOR BILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS SHOULD EITHER PARTY REQUEST IT. (IF NEGOTIATIONS FAIL, THE ICELANDIC GOVERNMENT COULD REQUEST TERMINATION AND WITHDRAWAL WITHIN ONE YEAR.)

DURING THE FIRST NEGOTIATING SESSION LAST OCTOBER, THE FOREIGN MINISTER PUT FORWARD THREE OPTIONS:

1. TO LEAVE THE PRESENT SITUATION UNCHANGED;
2. TO WITHDRAW THE DEFENSE FORCE; OR
3. TO ENSURE THE DEFENSE OF ICELAND WITHOUT THE DEFENSE FORCE BEING STATIONED IN ICELAND, FOR EXAMPLE, BY STATIONING FORCES ELSEWHERE AND HAVING ICELANDIC NATIONALS PERFORM VARIOUS FUNCTIONS.

WE HAVE FOCUSSED ON AMENDING THIS THIRD OPTION. SO FAR, THE ICELANDIC SIDE HAS NOT INDICATED TO US OFFICIALLY ITS VIEW OF HOW THIS OPTION WOULD BE CARRIED OUT.

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UNITED STATES OBJECTIVE

OUR OBJECTIVE, QUITE SIMPLY, IS TO MAINTAIN IN ICELAND THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF THE ICELAND DEFENSE FORCE FOR THE SECURITY THEY PROVIDE IN THE NORTH ATLANTIC AREA ON BEHALF OF NATO.

THESE ELEMENTS INCLUDE OCEAN AND AIR SURVEILLANCE, AIR DEFENSE OF ICELAND, AIR DEFENSE EARLY WARNING, COMMUNICATIONS AND NAVIGATIONAL ASSISTANCE, AND NAVAL SEARCH AND RESCUE.

WE BELIEVE WE CAN REDUCE THE NUMBER OF MILITARY PERSONNEL IN ICELAND BY ABOUT ONE-THIRD, PROVIDED WE CAN EMPLOY ICELANDIC AND US CIVILIANS TO REPLACE MANY OF THEM, AND STILL RETAIN THESE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS.

DURING DISCUSSIONS LAST NOVEMBER, WE MADE PROPOSALS IN THIS DIRECTION. THE ICELANDIC FOREIGN MINISTER HAS EXPRESSED THE VIEW THAT OUR PROPOSALS DO NOT GO FAR ENOUGH.

WE ARE PREPARED TO NEGOTIATE WITH GOOD WILL AND AS FLEXIBLY AS WE CAN.

THE ICELANDIC PROBLEM, AS WE SEE IT

THE ICELANDIC GOVERNMENT'S PROBLEM SEEMS TO BE THAT IT
IS VERY SERIOUSLY SPLIT ON THE ISSUE OF WHAT IT WANTS.
OF THE THREE COALITION PARTIES:

- THE COMMUNIST PEOPLE'S ALLIANCE WANTS US
FORCES COMPLETELY

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